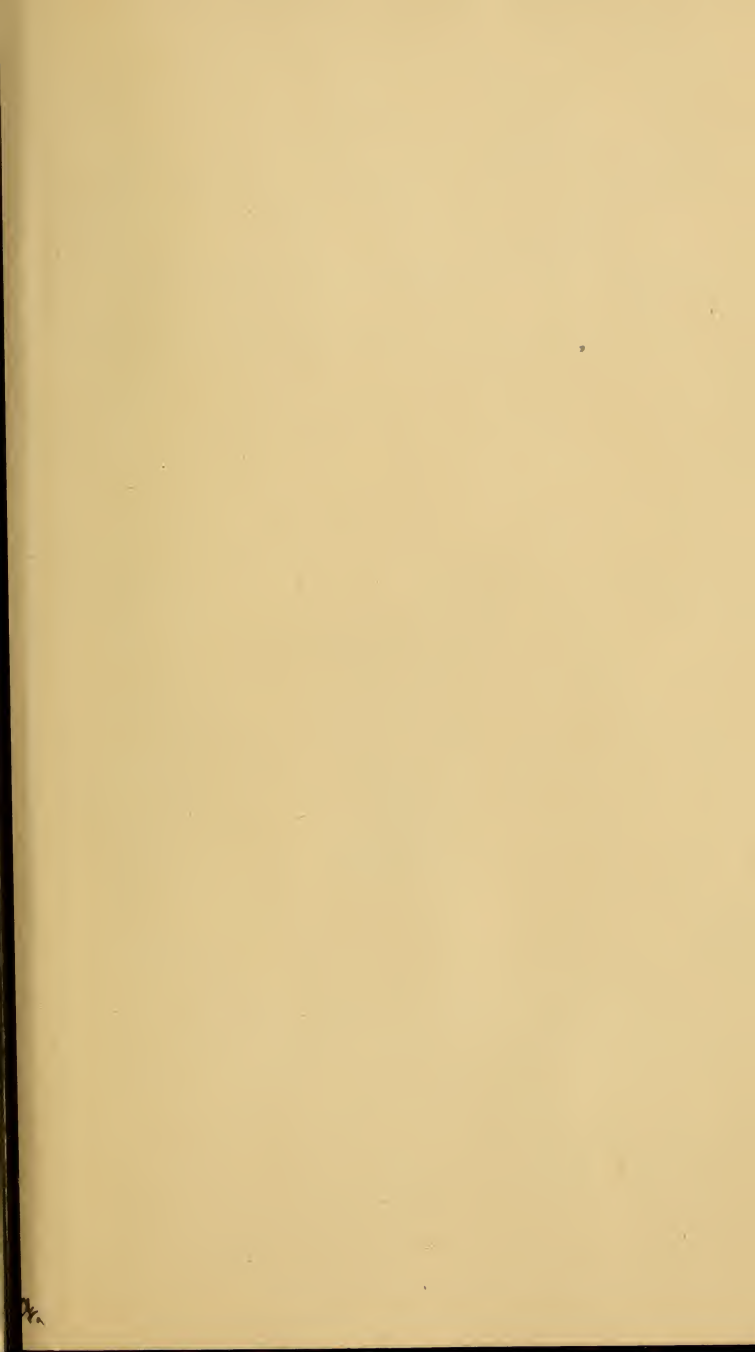
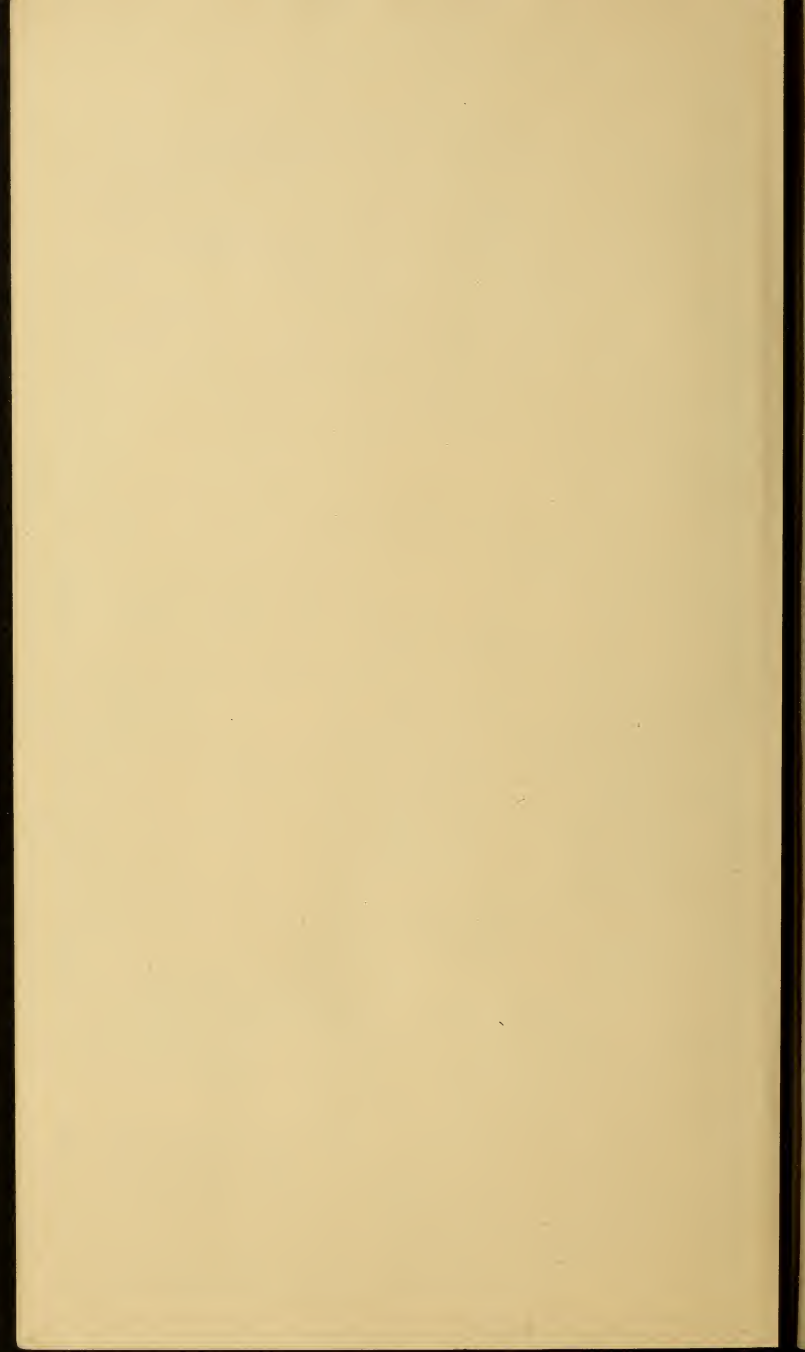


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# THE GREAT FIVE

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The First Faculty of the Ohio  
Wesleyan University

BY ISAAC CROOK



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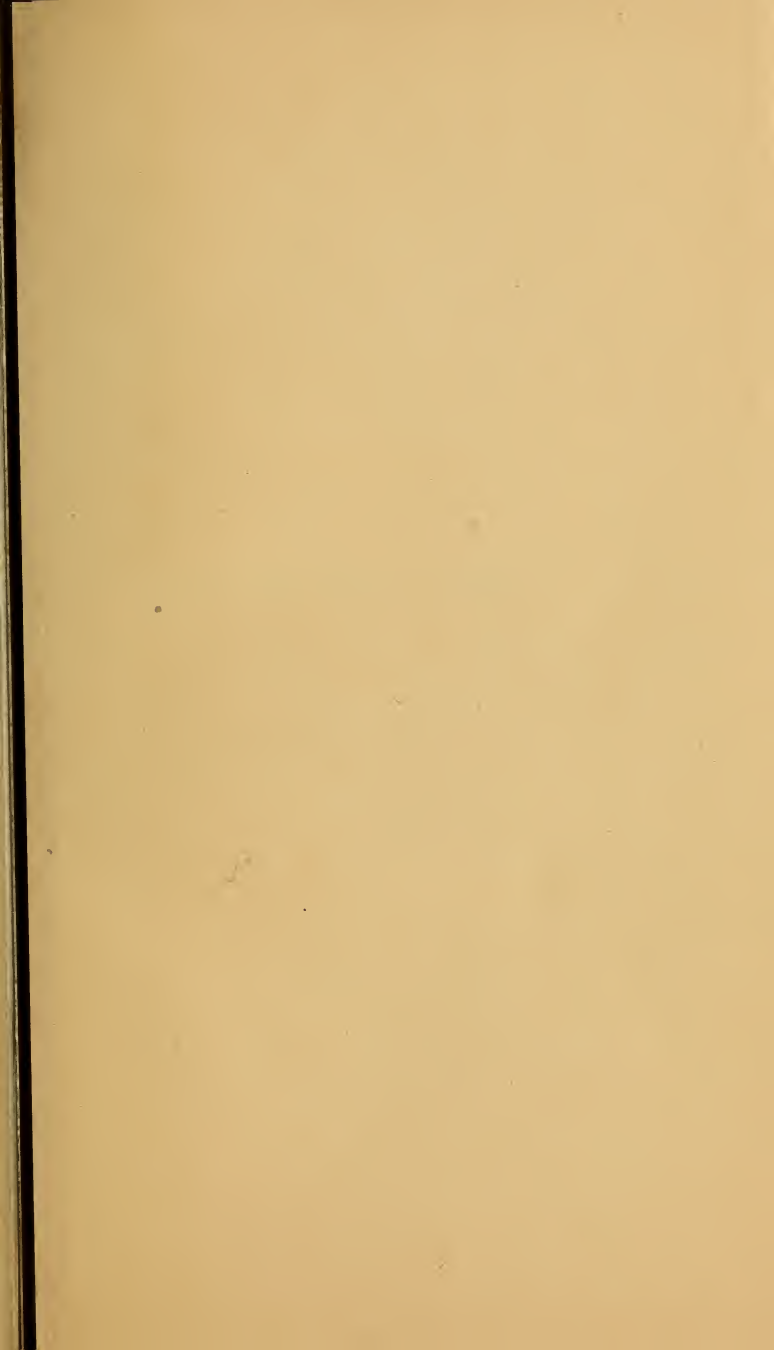


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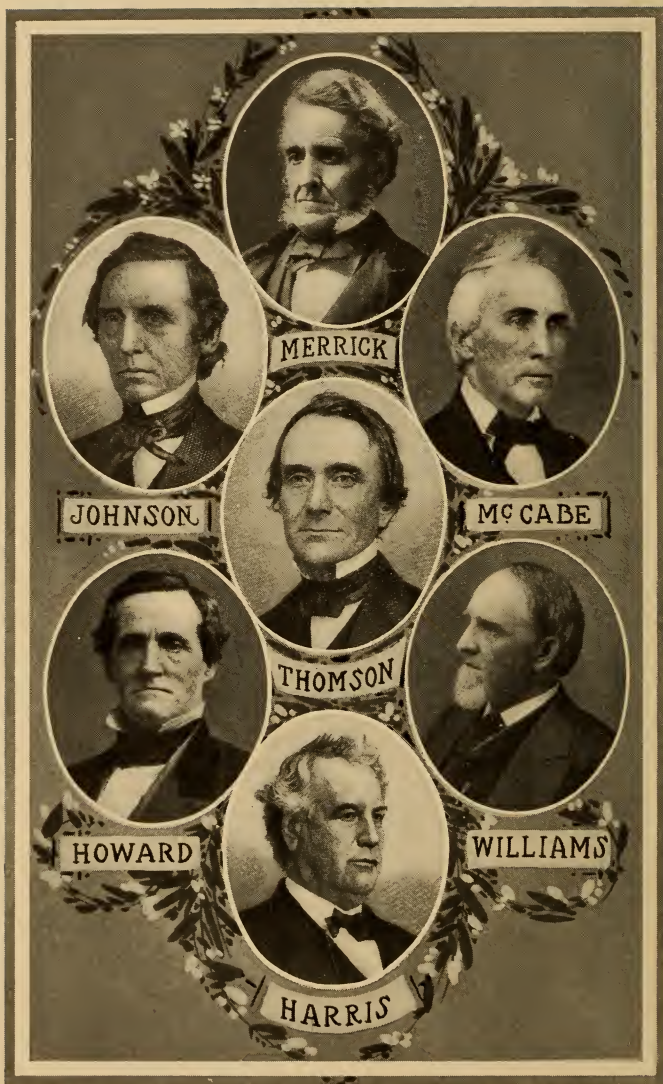




# THE GREAT FIVE







MERRICK

JOHNSON

MCCABE

THOMSON

HOWARD

WILLIAMS

HARRIS

# THE GREAT FIVE

The First Faculty of the Ohio  
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Dedicated to "'59"





*Besides personal reminiscences of many Alumni  
and the "Fiftieth Year Book" of the Uni-  
versity, I am greatly indebted to*

*Prof. S. W. Williams,  
long-time Book Editor of the  
Western Methodist  
Book Concern.*



## “ MOTIVE ”

The Board of Trustees of the Ohio Wesleyan University at its last session “expressed very great satisfaction for services rendered in collating this valuable information, and requested its publication.”

The Pittsburgh *Advocate* said: “The lecture delivered at the Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, on April 16th, by Dr. Isaac Crook, was unique. The theme was the Great Five who created that University: Thomson, Merrick, Harris, McCabe, and Williams. It was more than a biography, being reminiscent, historical, and educationally wide in scope. There is no other lecture of the kind covering the same ground, and can be none. It is adapted for general lecture, and is likely to be so used. It will go into the University archives, and would make a fine booklet.”



# The Great Five



I. THE first Faculty of the Ohio Wesleyan University, especially the Great Five, resembles a brilliant star of five points: Thomson, Merrick, Harris, McCabe, and Williams. These, above all others, were the makers of the Ohio Wesleyan University. Other men shared in its creation. Enterprising, generous citizens of Delaware invited the location and encouraged it by liberal donations. Leaders of the Ohio and the North Ohio Conference investigated, contributed, and pleaded for the founding of a University on the campus, foreordained by the creation of the sulphur spring. I could quote the burning words and generous deeds of those leaders.

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Five men constituted a small Faculty to man the work of a first-class institution of learning. But five loaves were made sufficient by divine intervention for five thousand men, besides women and children. In this case there were added at least two small fishes financially. Garfield's Faculty, consisting of Mark Hopkins on one end of the log, and himself on the other as student, was all the teaching force he would care for, may be trite, but suggests an important factor.

To found and give character to an institution of learning like this resembles the planting of a banyan tree. The thrifty stock throws out its branches, and they, dropping to the ground, plant another and another, until such trees can shelter as many as seven thousand men. The Ohio Wesleyan University has reproduced its like in this country and in the Orient in cases too numerous to mention, while its sons and daughters are at work in the

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world under every sky. Those who have misrepresented and dishonored this Alma Mater are so few as to be well-nigh forgotten.

II. To attempt a description of that great first Faculty is something like attempting a lecture on the departments of a modern University. How could one speak on literature, philosophy, mathematics, mechanics, athletics, and all beside, wooing included, within the limits of an hour? My purpose is to let you off before sunrise to-morrow morning.

In this address we must not forget that Dr. Herman M. Johnson officially graduated the forerunner of the Alumni of this institution. In 1845, Professor Johnson on Commencement Day stepped to the platform, having put on a hat, but no gown. Jared O. Church, whom he had taught in Augusta College, Ky., sat before him. In the presence of the trustees, Dr. Johnson said, "Surge, Domine Church."

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Mr. Church, either not comprehending or not promptly obeying, the Professor spoke in a lower tone, "Stand up, Mr. Church," and when he rose to his feet, Professor Johnson went on: "*Auctoritate mihi data*," etc. As soon as the degree was conferred, the Professor presented him a scroll, supposed to be his diploma, and took off his hat, making a slight bow; for the candidate having been thus admitted to college honors was to be henceforth treated no longer as a pupil, but as an equal. Dr. Johnson proved himself a great educator here for six years, and then for eighteen years Professor and President of Dickinson College.

Solomon Howard, like his namesake Solomon for wisdom, unlike him being a better man—spent two years here conducting a preparatory school, one of the rootlets of the coming University; then as Professor of Mathematics in the preliminary Faculty of Four for one year. His



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place afterward in the line of Ohio University Presidents for twenty years was overshadowed by none in that line.

I recall a sermon preached by him at a session of the Ohio Conference on the text, "All things are yours," which he called "an inventory of the Christian's estate." He spoke truth then never to be forgotten, as he had once before in speaking about a young lady teacher of his son. The boy was afterwards drowned in the Hocking River. "That girl," said Dr. Howard, "is worth her weight in gold." I have never had occasion to doubt this assertion concerning my future wife.

III. In portraying that great Faculty of Five it is not done to belittle their successors. He whose face is turned over his shoulder to the past is not fit to advance. "Why were the former days better than these?" is not a wise inquiry. The present Faculty and this throng of students show that the stream has gained in

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force as well as width. The Alumni are proud of their mother. I confess that I felt homesick when she celebrated her fiftieth anniversary. I could not attend, for I was then struggling for the life of the Nebraska Wesleyan University as its Chancellor, and succeeded in preventing an absolute wreck. But not a word from mother, though I, my wife, all our children, and others whom we adopted, graduated here. When the Alumni decided to propose the union of the Ohio Wesleyan and the Ohio Wesleyan Female College, I had the honor of carrying the marriage proposal to the trustees. I do not expect to ever regret the mission, though it was received coldly by the President of the Board then acting.

## I.

There are composite pictures, including the best qualities of a number of individuals. It might be comical, and even malignant, to select only the worst features in combination.

With a feeling of inadequacy, I attempt the former, the composite. The younger among you would be tempted to doubt my portrait should I succeed in doing it justice. Those who knew the men are liable to feel that I have fallen short, and no doubt in memory call up as striking phases of character and illustrative incidents.

1. The five had good ancestry.

(1) President Thomson was English, born at Portsea. The line ran back through such ancestry as the poet Thomson into Scotland, whence broke upon the world "the brainiest of the human race."

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(2) Harris *could* have been a Scotchman, as himself would put it, "if he had been a mind to." Possibly, like the great Welsh Harris, he may have had Cambrian blood. But he was born near Mansfield, Ohio—a very good man's field, if I may venture a pun. (The students of the University of the Pacific had a law for punishing a punster. The guilty one was caught by his chums and stood upon his head; there is no danger to me personally in this presence.)

(3) Merrick was Puritan, New England born, in Massachusetts. We are never certain what strains of blood make up the Puritan, but he will do to rely upon.

(4) In McCabe, the Mc points back to Erin; but he was born at Marietta, the birthplace of Ohio. His ancestors were Scotch-Irish.

(5) Williams was Welsh by at least seven generations back, when the family

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left Wales and settled in North Ireland. There the Professor's grandfather, William Williams, was born. Tradition in Chillicothe yet recalls the Irish brogue ornamenting his elegant English. I have often stood before the birthplace of William G. Williams, on High Street, Chillicothe. Had it been the birthplace of Œdipus it could scarcely have appealed to me as it did, because he was born there who conducted us through his masterly teaching to the mountain where Prometheus was bound.

Thus we see, three of the Five were born in Ohio, while the other two took on the stamp of Buckeye character.

2. Their personal appearance may interest us.

(1) The President was petite in form, never weighing over a hundred and twenty-five pounds, erect and elegant in his carriage, with great, searching gray eyes that seemed to look one through, and when de-



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livering his sublime lectures his smallness of stature was forgotten in the presence of his gigantic spirit.

(2) Harris was the largest of the Five, weighing two hundred pounds or more—vigorous, leonine, dark-haired, dark-eyed, commanding in his appearance.

(3) As far back as I remember, McCabe's hair was white, his face luminous, his frame not large, but elegant. When acting as President, Delaware "went dry." The chapel hour was prolonged; students made speeches; pledging went on. Professor Merrick came in and announced that the last saloon had closed its doors. McCabe's handkerchief swung round his white head as he shouted in the language of Henry of Navarre, "Follow where this white plume leads."

(4) Merrick, of medium size, more angular than any, with great, serious, dark eyes, wherein kindled a kindly light, his very person suggesting that he was living

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midway between two worlds. When he was too feeble to come to chapel without a crutch, his appearance evoked from a young man under discipline the remark, "If ever there was a saint on earth, there he is."

(5) Williams, not the largest nor the least of the Five, broad-shouldered, quick of motion, gray-eyed, smiling face, in every lineament gentleman, Christian, scholar, teacher.

Not one of them was as ugly as Lincoln, or Tolstoy, or Socrates. Not a whiff of tobacco about them.

3. Their scholarship was up to the opportunity of the times, and, judged by results, adequate to the making of an institution of learning.

(1) Thomson being brought to this country at the age of seven, acquired somehow at Wooster a fine acquaintance with academic literature. He afterward graduated in the medical department of the

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University of Pennsylvania at the age of nineteen. He was singularly gifted for acquainting himself with every realm of learning. His intellect was a great absorbent.

(2) Professor Merrick attended Wilbraham Academy, and afterwards completed to near the end the curriculum of Wesleyan University, being called away to take charge of Amenia Seminary, and afterward was Professor at the Ohio University for four years; was one year pastor at Marietta, and thence called to Delaware, in 1844, to a big debt and an empty building.

(3) McCabe was an Alumnus of the Ohio University at Athens, where he also taught for one year. In 1845 he was elected to the chair of Mathematics and Mechanical Philosophy in Ohio Wesleyan University. He was at his best afterward in Philosophy.

(4) Professor Harris was a graduate



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of Norwalk Seminary, then one of the foremost institutions west of the Alleghanies.

(5) Professor Williams was a graduate of "Old Woodward," Cincinnati.

Scholarly teachers, all of them. We know that an institution of learning does not furnish brains nor industry; not so much what a man studies as how. In this these men were masters. To glance outside, where were graduated Thomson of the Ohio State University and the late Harper of Chicago University? In a little college down by the Muskingum River, known as Muskingum College; one monument of the value of the small college.

4. In this picture a few minor characteristics may hint at the majesty of the composite man. These men had humor. Alas for the one who has not! It can be overdone. There was a member of our Literary Society who so constantly raised the laugh that we began to think he was never in earnest. He faded out of sight.

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Tom Corwin, that wizard of the stump and resistless orator, lamented at the last that he would be remembered only as the one who could make people laugh. Our first Faculty had sufficient humor; and "what we have felt and seen, with confidence we tell."

(1) When reciting logic on one occasion, I gave a syllogism involving a double negative. Thomson reminded me of the young lady who ran from a proposal, exclaiming, "No, no!" Afterward, when the fellow complained that she had refused him, she blandly reminded him that a double negative was equivalent to an affirmative. That lesson in logic stuck.

(2) Professor Harris was seated on platform during a lecture of the Rev. Dr. Barrows, of New England. Granville Moody had been asked to make the closing prayer; he sat smiling during the lecture. The smile was contagious. "Why do you laugh?" whispered Harris. "I'm going

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to tell Father on that man," said Moody; and he did, for he prayed for twenty minutes, traversing the whole lecture in contradiction. Dr. Barrows had made a plea for theological schools in Methodism. To cap the climax, our Society met next morning and passed resolutions thanking and indorsing Dr. Barrows, but repudiating the prayer. On another occasion a student was brightly converted at the altar in William Street Church. Professor Harris broke into a hearty laugh, out of sincere enjoyment of the spectacle. His way of joining the angels in heaven.

(3) Even serious-minded Merrick would say to a tobacco-user, "Name your price for quitting, and I will pay it." On the platform at chapel he feigned to have been confused by what, he said, looked like the smoke of a locomotive coming down William Street; when, lo, as it came near, it was a student behind his tobacco pipe. Under such ridicule my room-mate threw

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away his tobacco forever. When in Italy, he met Mark Twain, who said he was looking for Adam's grave. The Professor was too shrewd to be ranked as an "Innocent Abroad."

(4) McCabe bubbled the oftener because his fathers came from Erin. There went out a request from one of the Presidents (not Thomson) that the students should inform on each other. One day in class, Professor McCabe mildly declared it was right to obey the President's request; then, bringing down his fist on the desk, said, in thunderous tones, "Let me catch any of you telling on the others, and I'll give you a piece of my mind." To an objection against his doctrine of foreknowledge he replied, "I would answer if it did not wrench me so to kick at nothing."

(5) Professor Williams, of whom some student said he had invented Greek, saw amusing things mostly in literary matters.

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He was illustrating excessive condensation of style, and quoted the man who prayed to be forgiven for sins "both of *o-* and *com-mission*."

These minor peculiarities may serve as the scintillations of electric light that flash around a great mountain, giving the beholder hints of its majesty.

5. All these men began poor in purse, and mostly remained so from loyalty to the institution. Thomson had been offered the chair of Mental and Moral Philosophy in the University of Michigan; one writer says it was the Presidency. Williams was invited to a chair in the Ohio State University at a much larger salary than was paid him by the Ohio Wesleyan. In fact, all were prompted by their devotion to their call rather than by pay.

(1) Have we not in our denominational institutions presumed too far on this religious generosity, and so lost some of



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the finest teachers trained in our colleges? Yet this *law of service* is at the *foundation of Christianity*.

We have not yet come to that plea, "Put me into one of the priest's offices that I may eat a piece of bread."

(2) This began as a poor man's college for students also. One case may illustrate. A farmer and his wife raised small crops on a poor farm to send their boy to college. Commencement Day came; he met them at the train, escorted them through the town to the President's office, and seemed proud to introduce them as "Father" and "Mother." (Some of us saw President Thomson as proud of his mother leaning on his arm about these streets.) Commencement Day came; the boy graduated; the venerable father turned to his wife and said, "Mother, this is the best crap we ever raised." I knew one fellow live for a whole week on ten cents. With that he bought a peck of corn-meal,

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and had salt enough, with water thrown in. This cheapening may be overdone; but the old Faculty set the pace for the poor man's son. Usually it is the fellow with a full pocket that causes trouble and falls out by the way; all the more credit to him when he overcomes the added obstacle of wealth.

6. The original Faculty were all *ministers of the gospel*. With men of that profession began our American colleges.

(1) John Harvard, and men like him, originated the first college, with its faith declared in the motto, "Christus et Ecclesia."

(2) Governor Yale furnished the name, while Bishop Berkeley and the clergy determined the fate of Yale College. "Westward the Star of Empire took its way till it settled on Berkeley, California." Revivals at Yale were frequent for many years, producing men like Horace Bushnell, who modified the severity of New England theology.

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(3) Williams College and its haystack prayer-meeting will never be forgotten. The successors of the apostles were divinely ordained to lead mankind, not only in religion, but in literature, learning, and reform. It was therefore but normal that our institutions of learning should have originated with them. There is a swing the other way, and a few laymen are found heading great institutions; but it is impossible for them to avoid the function of the pastor and preacher, though nominally laymen. Such are Hadley of Yale, Wilson of Princeton, and Harris of the Northwestern. Such was Canfield in the State Universities of Nebraska and Ohio.

(4) In that Faculty of the Ohio Wesleyan there were preachers of the first order. The President I have not heard surpassed, and I remember in this statement hearing Spurgeon, Lyddon, Henry Ward Beecher, Dr. Plummer, Randolph S. Foster, Matthew Simpson, and John P.



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Durbin. Not one of them made me forget which way to go to find the door of exit after the sermon was over. Thomson did that. Professor Williams did the least preaching of any man in the first Faculty, but it was the preaching of scholarly, earnest persuasiveness.

7. This leads to another fact in the history of this University. Like other great denominational institutions, it is a *child of prayer*.

(1) When Princeton College was coming into existence as the "Log College" under the two saintly Tennents, in 1726, there was a prayer-meeting held by women in the adjoining room.

(2) One hundred and eight years afterward, in 1834, when the first Board of Trustees of Oberlin College, Ohio, was formulating its policy, including Abolitionism and the admission of negro students, there was great hesitancy on account of the heated conflict presaging the Rebellion, and

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the risk financially, as well as danger of mob violence. In the house of Rev. Mr. Shipherd (a returned missionary and pioneer of Oberlin College) the trustees were in session, wrestling with the problem of a definite policy. In an adjoining room were three anxious women; two of them went apart to pray. Mrs. Shipherd easily overheard the discussion and kept the suppliants informed. Finally, the vote on the policy was a tie. The President of the Board, Father Keep, cast the deciding vote affirmatively. There began one of the noblest careers of any institution of learning. Out of that meeting came opportunity for the black race, heroic conscience, and revivalism, with which the name of Finney stands connected forever.

(3) More recently there was a contest between Chillicothe and Wooster over the location of a university. How much praying was done I am not informed, but there was good Presbyterian fighting. Just be-

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low the site for the college on Carlisle Place, Chillicothe, is a brewery. When attention was called to the fumes arising from that plant to the nostrils of the young people, the deciding vote sent the institution to Wooster.

(4) How, in this respect, about the Ohio Wesleyan? There was no doubt much praying at the beginning. After the Faculty of Five had come together, President Thomson for a time relinquished his class-work and became a student pastor, visiting the young men in their rooms, to talk and pray with them. Immediately there was established a weekly prayer-meeting of the Faculty and a daily evening meeting for the students. This was speedily followed by the conversion of over eighty young men, nearly all the students in the college. That method of matriculating into the school of Christ has been as regular as the opening of the college year and as ceaseless as the flow of the sulphur

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spring. The River of the Water of Life from beneath the throne flows this way. Were there time I should like to recite the similar origin and early career of Kenyon College of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and of Denison of the Baptist Church. Ohio was, in fact, pre-empted for collegiate learning by the Churches from the start. Hence here are more denominational institutions of learning and more men and women with college diplomas per capita than in any other State. Ohio has, in all, thirty-five colleges and universities. Even New York has not so many. A careless, scholastic, learned, skeptical Faculty would have blighted it all. Herein is the main reason for maintaining the denominational institution of learning for the sake of the State University as well as ours.

(5) As American citizens, we rejoice in our great public school system, affiliated naturally with the lavishly endowed State

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University. But let us have our young men and women during their under-graduate collegiate life in formative years, then let the State do its specializing work for them. I sometimes fear we are overdoing it with our limited means and divine calling by attempting to vie with them in this special work.

### THE CURRICULUM.

1. Let us not begin too soon to specialize as a rule, nor press it to narrowness and bigotry. The first time I ever saw a razor-back hog was in Alabama in the woods. I could scarcely make out whether the creature was wolf, dog, or hog. On closer survey it seemed poised just above its fore-legs, its sharp spine and great snout at work rooting for its daily food. It looked as though it might upset forward, such had been its growth and that of its ancestors through long generations. It had been specializing, and so was very narrow it saw neither forest nor heaven.



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2. The *curriculum* has had a hard time. Chancellor McCracken, of New York University, suggested something like this: The head of Sir Curriculum was once filled to over-fullness with subjects of study. Then his body was stuffed out with multitudinous departments to great corpulency nigh unto bursting. Farther on, his arms and legs were drawn to great tenuity and length by specializing, until there has been risk of his being torn asunder.

3. In later years there has been a tendency on the part of the State Universities to get together and dominate the curriculum, capture the public schools, secure favorable legislation, vast endowments, and establish a great secular university in Washington City. In so far as this has ignored the denominational school, it should put us on our mettle as well as good behavior. I am not sure that we greatly need the American University, but let it be endowed and equipped. Professor McCabe once

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said, "I would not send my son to a German University, even to stay over night." That was his emphasis on the sad outcome, many a time witnessed, of young Americans coming thence scientifically equipped, but with the eyes of their faith blinded. Literal blindness were preferable to this.

4. Doubtless the ancient classics drew too heavily for a long time on the attention and talent of students. Then followed a breaking away into more practical and industrial education, largely inspired by ambition to quickly acquire definite scientific knowledge, but more frequently with a purpose to get rich quick. This policy is being pressed down into the common schools with disastrous results even to the little ones. This was an absolute necessity to the emancipated Negro under Booker T. Washington, but has gone too far in the education of whites, from primary school to university. Fortunately there is at this time a rising protest among educational



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leaders, and a plea for mental training, primarily.

The old Faculty of Five set the pace which can not be ignored, however much improved upon.

5. Has not the function of the ideal *College President* also undergone a change? The wider curriculum, the larger Faculty, and the financial pressure have forced the College President into attention to affairs financial and merely administrative. In fact, he must be five men in one; one to the students, one to the Faculty, another to the public, another to the banker, and, sometimes hardest of all, one to the Board of Trustees.

Was it so with Dwight, Wolsey, Burr, McCosh, Mark Hopkins, William H. McGuffey, and Wilbur Fisk (who had the wisdom to decline being made Bishop rather than College President), and, as he looks to us, the tallest pinnacle of them all, Edward Thomson?

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Must this type pass out, or should there not be relief from the quintuple drain on the University President of to-day?

6. In addition to their intrinsic worth as a Faculty, these men were highly favored by *long continuance*. The trustees of the Ohio Wesleyan University have been endowed with extraordinary wisdom in this. There has been a disposition to trust the President and Faculty with management of the curriculum. Have I not seen the club raised annually over the heads of my choicest Professors? A painful knowledge of this fact dampened their enthusiasm, kept them on the alert for another position, and destroyed their loyalty to the ungrateful institution itself. The Ohio Wesleyan Faculty has practically enjoyed a life tenure.

(1) Of the first five, Harris was called out to be Assistant Missionary Secretary to Dr. Durbin, at the end of nine years in this Faculty; nor did the service he ren-

## THE GREAT FIVE

dered in that office afterward as Secretary, and then as Bishop, diminish his usefulness.

(2) President Thomson was called out to the editorial chair of the *Christian Advocate* at the end of fourteen years. Somebody blundered. It was a step downward from the highest throne of power to sit on a tripod. He filled the place well, and was then, at the end of four years, elected Bishop, a position for which he was less qualified than that of College President. Bishops deal in patronage and appointments; College Presidents grow men, and eclipse in the grandeur of their position all other men, unless it be ministers of the gospel, and yet they also cause the preacher to enter his work equipped. It may have been a mistake when Dr. Broadus, of the Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, the mightiest in the South, said to me, "I covet your privilege of preaching the gospel to a congregation." It may also have

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been a bright reminiscence that led Professor McCabe to wish he might have remained in the pastorate in which he spent one year amid the Hocking Hills.

(3) He had what seems to us a far greater career building here for fifty-two years, while Merrick, including his Emeritus Professorship, spent here forty-nine years, and Williams rounded out fifty-seven. We can recall no similar average length of term.

These men were allowed to build on their own foundation, and continued the structure into durable and magnificent proportions.

7. The Five constituted a unit only emphasized by their *differences*, both in their position and attitude toward matters theoretical and practical.

(1) For illustration: Harris, when Bishop, objected to my having used the Revised Version for morning prayer at a Conference session. Williams taught us Greek

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and some Hebrew in exact style. He translated the Psalms for Sunday-school use, and his translation of the Epistle to the Romans is so thoroughly modern and accurate as to have entitled him to membership in the Revision Committee, which, but for his modesty, might have been assigned him. Harris, in his objection to use of the Revision, under the circumstances, was correct. Williams, in his accurate style for the puposes intended, was also correct; hence harmony.

(2) Professor Merrick in his classes on Political Economy advocated free-trade doctrine. Being absent for a day, Professor McCabe heard his class, and with jocularly announced, "Make hay while the sun shines. We will turn over in the text to the subject of tariff." He was an earnest advocate of protection. Fortunate for us to have had both sides presented during our days of education.

(3) After leaving the University, I in-



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quired of Professor Merrick for the best helps in the study of the character of Christ. He advised to let other helps go and give almost exclusive attention to the four Gospels. I carried the same question to Professor Williams. "That," said he, "is bad advice; get Edersheim and study it;" remarking casually that Canon Farrar had written an eloquent Life of Christ. These individualities were aids to the unbroken harmony that reigned throughout their history.

8. Usually professors are longer lived professionally than presidents. These are exposed to more artillery practice, yet men are found willing to take the risks of their position.

(1) Long-lived Faculties seem necessary to the growth of student groups, like the great Edinburgh Five made up of Drummond, John Watson, Ross, Stalker, and George Adam Smith.

(2) Out of Harvard came, near the

## THE GREAT FIVE

same time, Emerson, Holmes, and Thoreau. From Bowdoin came Longfellow and Hawthorne. The latter seems to me the finest modern writer of English.

(3) Where are the groups of great authors, orators, statesmen, and divines from Alma Mater? I remind me that this is *not roll-call*. For the present, pass it on to Middletown Wesleyan.



## II.

Possibly it may assist our composite picture to look at some of the five for a little while individually.

1. Notice some of the personal qualities of the man who staid the shortest time, Professor Harris. May I be somewhat personal and not egotistic? My first impression of him had an awakening effect. Possibly I was shy as I entered his recitation-room to find him there alone. With that leonine look of his he fairly demanded, "What do you want, sir?" There was an instinctive response intended to be self-respecting: "I came to find out my work in your department." With an immediate change into the kindest manner, I had my work and admired the man.

## THE GREAT FIVE

As before mentioned, he saw the *amusing* side of things. (1) Looking over the bulletin board at the opening of the term for his class hours, he noticed the hour of prayer. There was no irreverence for him to say, "I don't take prayers this term."

(2) When in Palestine on an Episcopal tour, the little company in the tent were singing hymns. Just outside, one of the donkeys broke in on the harmony with loud braying. The Arab driver remarked, "You sing one tune he think he know." The humor of the situation furnished the Bishop many a hearty laugh.

Of course, he had the other quality of *tenderness*. Returning from the railway station after Commencement, I heard him say, "I always feel like crying when this hour of separation comes to us yearly." As a fellow guest with him in Albion, Michigan, he was induced to repeat some poetry written by Bishop Thomson's inti-

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mate friend, Otway Curry, one stanza running thus:

“ 'T is sweet to think when struggling  
The goal of life to win,  
That just before the shores of Time,  
The better days begin.  
When through the nameless ages  
I cast my longing eyes,  
Before me, like a boundless sea,  
The great hereafter lies.”

He was also induced to repeat from T. Buchanan Read:

“I stood by the open casement  
And looked upon the night,  
And saw the grand procession  
Pass slowly out of sight.”

Closing with—

“ O, may I long remember  
The palest fainting one  
May, to diviner vision, be  
A bright and blazing sun.”

He then said, merrily, “Do n't ask for any more poetry; that 's all I know.”

Without reflecting upon any man living or dead, an incident may bring out one of the most admirable of human qualities.

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During a political campaign he got into a heated discussion on the streets of Delaware with a citizen of high rank. Unfortunately some statement was replied to by the other man's fist. Instead of continuing or resenting the insult, Professor Harris turned and walked away. Knowing as we did that he was able to have wiped the earth with his antagonist, and that his impetuosity would naturally have inclined him to do it, the higher quality that gave him self-command appealed to us with the greatest possible emphasis, and furnished a practical exegesis of the command "to turn the other also."

He not only spoke, but wrote most vigorously for the *abolition* of human slavery. It amused him very much to be a guest at the same home with a Southern brother who owned slaves. Professor Harris, having a very heavy, dark beard, shaved every day, including Sunday. At this the slaveholding sinner was greatly

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shocked, which was heartily, and in a jocular way, reciprocated by the Professor. He was thoroughly informed on missionary work and a capable Secretary; was also Secretary of the General Conference for four sessions till elected Bishop. He was an ecclesiastical lawyer, and left two books of great value: one, "Legal Powers of the General Conference;" the other, "Henry and Harris on Ecclesiastical Law."

2. Professor Merrick was of different temperament. One would not have thought it from outward appearances, but there was a time, when his sky was so overclouded with darkness, that he felt for a time uncertain of the divine existence. This he attributed in part to his lectureship in Starling Medical College, but the study of nature and reasonableness helped him out. "I am sure," said he, "of things invisible; as, for example, electricity; but I only know it by phenomena; and are not the phenomena of God overwhelming?" So



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by obedience, he came out into great light. At a later time he suffered unspeakable physical agony. It invaded his whole soul; like a martyr on the rack, he endured to the last, and again found great deliverance. He persistently declined the honorary D. D. He insisted on our going deeper than text-book for truth. "Is it true?" he would demand.

He was so gentle that, rather than destroy a mosquito, he would lift the window and set it free. His poultry would gather about him, each one seeming to know its own name. Faith Chapel, Delaware, long known as the "Barefoot Church," was his special ward. While he fought the saloon relentlessly, he came into personal acquaintance with the saloon-keeper in the kindest manner. During the Civil War, the Rev. Mr. Given was pastor of St. Paul's Church, Delaware. He was one of the most charming and scholarly of ministers; had been a teacher in the South. His sym-

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pathies were Southern. He spoke out too publicly. A mob was brewing; a rope was found hung on the parsonage door-knob one morning. Professor Merrick, the Massachusetts-born Abolitionist, suppressed the mob. When the first Atlantic cable was laid, Professor Merrick summoned us to the campus at night; amid speeches and cheers he declared he felt like an electric battery. A sermon by him on the text "All guilty before God," reminded one of Jonathan Edwards in his "The sinner in the hands of an angry God." At an altar exercise in St. Paul's Church he went to some students who were working up an agony and quietly said, "Let all things be done decently and in order." It was a timely interference. One evening, at the beginning of the term, he dismissed chapel service in a startling manner, requesting only those who were by experience Christians to remain behind; those who went out looked as if con-



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science-smitten; those who staid felt the burden he had laid upon them in behalf of the others. Later in life, during my pastorate at St. Paul's, he spoke at a prayer-meeting, saying, "In my Father's house are many mansions; my wife has gone before; I shall follow;" and turning, invited me to call and see them in their mansion. (I am reminded that this is the night of Passion Week when Jesus spoke of the mansions.) As to any literature, he was a frequent contributor to the religious press, especially in his later days when leisure had come. But he is speaking through the Merrick Lectures annually. By his endowment yonder beautiful dell has become vocal for all times.

3. Much must be omitted concerning Professor McCabe. In his jollity he would say, "Come up, Professor Harris, and let us exchange lies." Having once heard him preach on the text "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be ana-

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thema marantha," his scholarliness and impetuous persuasiveness could never be doubted. In a love-feast at William Street Church he spoke of the name "Jesus," declaring that he could hang his eternal hopes on each several letter in that sacred name. When he and Charles, his nephew, knelt, one on each side of a penitent student and sang together, "Show pity, Lord; O Lord, forgive," he never seemed so great in any other attitude.

Having been myself sadly afflicted in youth by the doctrine of fatalistic Calvinism, I was prepared to appreciate his masterly treatment of divine foreknowledge and divine nescience. He made that discussion more of a past issue in theology than ever. It still finds its home mainly in the realm of fiction. In addition to these books, he also wrote a small volume, "Light on the Pathway of Holiness," more stimulating than analytical.

4. Williams outlasted them all. He re-

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minds one of Socrates as well as of Arnold of Rugby. Out of admiration he was dubbed "Old Syntax." Here, again, personal touch may illustrate. When first I entered his class in Greek and asked a question, he sent it back to me with a whizz. That did its work. I was aroused, and with something of firmness told him "I was asking for information." With great blandness, he smiled and led me out of perplexity. Here was revealed the Socratic method, which made him an almost matchless teacher. Jesus in that method surpasses Socrates. No wonder teachers' institutes kept Williams busy in the vacation time. He taught them how to teach. His volume "English Grammar," thin almost as a knife-blade, is clear as light. I have spoken of his Commentary on Romans. Whoever understands that Epistle has the key to the Bible. Williams makes clear the meaning of Foreordination and Election in such a way that McCabe relied

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upon him for the expository part of his own great work on Fatalism.

He was something of a financier, and proved a safe treasurer of the University for thirty-four years. Professor Merrick served as auditor for forty-one years. Williams was led into financial ventures in a Chicago Fire Insurance Company. By reason of the great fire, it proved ruinous. Williams was not the man to take advantage of the bankrupt law. Moral honesty stood with him far above legal righteousness. Had there been need of martyrs in their days, I know not one of that Faculty who would have shrunk.

It was so characteristic of his sincerity and simplicity that I mention a meeting during his later life between him and Doctor Rogers, the Assyriologist. It occurred during the Conference session at Kenton, Ohio, where we were guests. Williams, the great scholar, much the senior of Rogers, plied him with questions with such

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warmth and intelligence as to draw forth in short time enough for a volume. The manner, charmingly boyish, was penetrating as that of a seer.

His religious life was less demonstrative than that of the other members of the Faculty; in fact, he was seldom found at the weekly prayer-meeting. Possibly he disliked the religious gush of many a raw student. In the prayer-meeting, one is greatly tried by repetitiousness and unmeaning phrasing, mannerisms serving as grave-clothes for the dead. Were these cut out of many a prayer, little would be left but the Amen. It is a mistake to keep away from prayer-meeting even thus despoiled of freshness. It were better to improve it. Professor Williams was so accurate, refined, and honest as to be highly sensitive to such irreverence. Prayer-meeting was less attractive, therefore, to him than to most true Christians. It fell to him one year to make the leading ad-



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dress at the opening of the Week of Prayer. It was a great revelation he gave from his own experience, and was attended by clear argument and impassioned appeal for immediate surrender.

He and Œdipus were akin. Let me quote from "Prometheus" by Percival as our tribute to Williams:

"Our thoughts are boundless, though our frames are frail;  
Our souls immortal, though our limbs decay;  
Though darken'd in this poor life by a veil  
Of suffering dying matter, we shall play  
In truth's eternal sunbeams; on the way  
To heaven's high capitol our cars shall roll.  
The temple of the Power whom all obey:  
That is the mark we tend to, for the soul  
Can take no lower flight, and seek no meaner goal.'

5. In attempting a definite description of President Thomson, I must again ask pardon for using the personal method. An itinerant preacher came to our little country church; I can not recall his text, subject, or sermon. He announced scholarships for sale on the Ohio Wesleyan Uni-

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versity; that answered a vague wish cherished from boyhood. My elder brother Bradford and I, each invested. My scholarship called for eight years' instruction for thirty dollars. Ever since recruits have been coming from that district among the hills. Afterward, while a boy teacher earning funds to go to college, Thomson's Inaugural Address came to me in pamphlet form. It stirred the blood. One passage in it describing the Widow's Son on Commencement Day, broke over me like a storm. When afterward I entered his office he charmed me by his manner. "Will you matriculate?" said he. That was a new word, but I was sure it did not mean inoculate. The deft and gentle manner with which he presented the book of registration drew me to him. Afterward I felt free to seek his advice privately on the great problems of life, among them the acceptance of a high-grade appointment to supply a church during my last collegiate



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year. He persuaded me not to do it. Then the question of a theological school; and last, but not least, the problem of matrimony.

The first lecture which I heard from him after entering college reminded me of the sweep of a mighty eagle toward the sun, producing a conviction that I must see to it at once or be left behind and out of reach of any fellowship with such great souls.

I have already mentioned how, once, a lecture of his on the character of Christ had so dazed me that for a moment I had to collect myself to find the way to the door. Some of the most careless and irreligious of the young men I have heard in after years quoting from his lectures. There was one such story about a father whose boy had been stolen by gypsies. After long search he overtook the thief, seized him, and lifted him from the earth, brought him down; lifted him again and

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brought him down; lifted him a third time and brought him down dead. I heard the late Colonel Watson quote this. I have heard bishops and distinguished preachers recite long passages from his published addresses, forgetting to give credit. Take a page of his writing, count the monosyllables, and I know of none who excel him in that excellent source of lucidity. There was in him a poetic vein which saturated his thought and diction. During a serious illness it was my privilege, among other students, to be a night-watch by his sick-bed. A volume of Robert Burns was at hand. I read and never forgot the quatrain:

“ Still o’er these scenes my memory wakes,  
And fondly broods with miser care;  
Time but the impression deeper makes  
As streams their channels deeper wear.”

It was during that illness he had a dream. An angel was villifying the human family for its meanness. Thomson replied,

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in poetic measure, and could remember on waking one stanza, which I recall:

“ I, too, am angel made,  
And round my head a sphere is laid  
Which is not less than Heaven.”

His volumes of essays, lectures, sermons, and letters have not been surpassed in style or scope by more recent floods of literature; and there is a flood of great books. One has to acquire the mastery of the reading art to keep in touch and get its value.

During the days of Thomson here, and for some years afterward, his volumes were oftenest rebound of any in the library, so great was their use. In the recitation-room he would allow us to get swamped reciting Butler's "Analogy." In his Sunday lectures it was often "Butler Improved" and made as beautiful as a poem. The two volumes containing his observations during his voyage round the world are astonishing for their clear description of scenery and their forecast of the destiny

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of Asia and Europe. Within ten years' time his prophecies were fulfilled, especially in the wars and readjustments of the map of Europe. His lecture on the Taj-Mahal is finer than that finest structure in India.

He was a man of sorrows, and so were all in that Faculty. Twice it was my melancholy privilege to be a pall-bearer for the family. Once as a student, when four of us sat in St. Paul's Church and heard Dr. Gurley preach, with his Irish tenderness and eloquence, over the dead body of a deeply mourned little girl. He quoted with great aptness those lines of Otway Curry I have already mentioned, as repeated by Bishop Harris.

When editor of the New York *Christian Advocate* it was his sad experience to bury his first wife, Maria Louisa, daughter of Governor Mordecai Bartley. By the side of her coffin, Dr. Newman, afterwards Bishop, received her son into the Church.

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The body was taken to Oakwood Cemetery, in Delaware.

When as Bishop he went round the world and reached Foochow, he thus describes an experience:

"Weary, wan, and ghostlike, twenty thousand miles and more from home, the sight of an American, a brother, a minister, was almost too much for me. I was at home. Here was Brother Maclay, as kind as a natural brother could be, and Mrs. Maclay, as considerate as a sister or a mother; here was a fireside where the Bible was read, and happy Christian children joined in the songs of Zion. It was an overcoming joy, and the silent tears stole down my wan cheeks as I sat back in my chair and leaned my head against the wall."

When he left home for the last time, unexpectedly he returned to his family in Evanston, making a long journey, as he said, "for a better good-bye." His second



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wife, the elegant Annie E. Howe, was delighted to receive it. He then went on his way to preside at the session of the Newark Conference. He reached Wheeling, was taken ill of typhoid-pneumonia, and died in a hotel. He really had never recovered from the effects of his Oriental journey. He was a passenger on a vessel saturated with the fumes of a cargo of opium. The pallor of the poison never left his face, nor did his appetite ever recover its former vigor. He once said to me, "I thought that when on the Red Sea I should join Pharaoh and his hosts at the bottom." When the body was being brought to Delaware it was my privilege to carry his empty hat across the railway station at Columbus. There seemed a great vacuum in the little space once filled by that splendid head. Later on I became a second time pall-bearer for the family, and helped carry him to yonder Oakwood Cemetery, where now sleep all the Faculty, except

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Harris. For the sake of completeness, would that he might also there await the resurrection!

It was my privilege after his departure to spend a night in the room in the Grant House, Wheeling, where Bishop Thomson died. There was the Bible on the mantel, and I read again the chapter from which he had preached on the "Humiliation and Exaltation of Christ." I spent a wakeful night, and rededicated myself, by that bedside on which he died, to the service of Him whom he had so marvelously exalted by his preaching.

It was my privilege to nominate for Visitor and Examiner of the University, in behalf of the Alumni, his daughter Eliza Thomson Powell, as a recognition of her fitness for the responsibility. Later experience has taught me that there is need of women trustees for co-educational universities.

Thomson's conscientiousness was illus-



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trated in the strict observance of the Sabbath. Who knows but that his son's devotion to this great, vital subject sprang from the father's example? When that father was sent abroad by the trustees to purchase books for the library, he became much attached to a fellow-traveler. In order to visit Italy and make the outgoing steamer, it was necessary to travel on Sunday. Very reluctantly, Thomson gave up the coveted journey. His companion went down on the fated ship with all on board. Professor McCabe startled us in a Sunday afternoon lecture ere Thomson's return, by narrating the incident without name, and then declaring that, but for his keeping the law, the Ohio Wesleyan would to-day be in mourning for its drowned President.

When smitten with his fatal illness at Wheeling, his family were in Evanston. He withheld the telegram announcing his approaching death rather than have his wife travel on Sunday to reach him. They

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never met again on earth alive, but had enjoyed "the better good-bye."

Kindred to this was his loyalty to his convictions in civic matters. Our Literary Society had engaged the editor of the *Ohio Statesman* to deliver a Commencement oration. Meantime that paper had savagely attacked a lecture of President Thomson on "Pulpit and Politics." The Society would not brook the discourtesy, and canceled the engagement with the editor of the newspaper. Being Corresponding Secretary of the Society, I wrote the letter of recall with keen relish.

On another occasion, our President said, in a lecture, "I will not obey the Fugitive Slave Law, but will suffer its extremest penalty in case of need." We knew that he would do so in the same temper as the three Hebrew children risked the fiery furnace, saying, "We are not careful to answer thee, O king!"

His religion saturated his whole being.

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As a youth he became skeptical. "A disease," said Professor Merrick to our class in Evidences, "as sure to thinking youth as are the mumps and measles to children." Young Thomson gathered a club to disprove the Bible. Being open-minded, he was convinced of its truth. A sermon at a camp-meeting, preached by Russel Bigelow, whom Thomson afterwards called "the Henry Clay of the Western pulpit," brought him to repentance. Afterward in his office he saw a young friend killed while moving a house. Thomson fell upon his knees in self-consecration.

His chapel prayers were never two alike. Fresh as the morning, they generally sprang from the lesson in the Bible, which he read in course from day to day.

He had his oddities; he was very self-forgetful. It was said he would bid good-morning to the cow on the street; put his hat under his arm and his book on his head when leaving the recitation-room. At the

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close of a sermon he failed to recognize his own wife. When a Bishop, he was our guest in Portsmouth, Ohio. It was in the early autumn. Before going to the church he put on warmer stockings. On coming down stairs his wife discovered one foot had been neglected. The low-cut shoe had a naked foot in it. We should have had our barefoot angel in the pulpit during that great Centennial Sermon, but for the vigilance of his wife. I have seen him lose his ticket while traveling on the train.

In spite of this abstraction and obliviousness, it was dangerous to trifle with him. A young fellow had committed a gross misdemeanor. He was called forward in chapel, the President saying, "It becomes my painful duty to administer a public reproof." "I will not receive it," said the youngster, and, whirling, marched for the door. "You have received it," replied the President. A thunder of applause in approval followed the youngster out. The

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next day a letter written by the student was read in chapel, most humbly apologizing.

A party of young men went off for a night of it in an omnibus. Their conduct was peculiar here; for, returning home late in the night, they were nearly all drunk. Somehow, Thomson knew of it, and they were aware that he did; as one of them afterwards told me, he hung his silence above them like a thunder-cloud, and they felt it was the severest punishment he could have administered.

In his morning talks he would touch upon matters, the mention of which would have been vulgar in ordinary men. His treatment was pure as the snow, and killed off the microbe of vulgarity. On one such occasion he swept his eagle eye around, saying, "I could point you out every man who is guilty." Insisting on personal neatness, he declared, "Some of you look as though your hair had not been combed



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since the Revolutionary War." Warning us against the wiles of Cupid, "Beware," said he; "for often the Freshman's beloved is the Senior's despised." Speaking on our diet, he told of the man who complained to the doctor of sleeplessness and dreaming frequently of seeing his father. "What do you eat before retiring?" "O, nothing much; half a mince-pie." "Eat the other half and you will see your grandfather." An invalid was asked to take exercise: "Take a walk." "O, I can not walk." "Ride on horseback." "That would kill me." "Ride in a buggy." "I could not endure it." "How do you exercise?" "I do this"—twirling his thumbs round each other with folded hands. "What, then, do you do when you get tired?" "I twirl them in the opposite direction."

After his Episcopal tour round the world, he was presiding in the Chicago General Conference. There was a tumultuous debate. Amid the struggle of the

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giants he lost control. Secretary Harris had to coach him. A few days afterward, in giving his report of his observations in the East, he said, "I have ridden on the elephant, on the camel, and on the donkey, but this General Conference has proven the worst saddled beast of any of them all." The tumultuous applause indicated that the Bishop was again in command.

In his early ministry he was pastor in Detroit. His preaching was attended with extraordinary interest; his congregation would spontaneously rise to their feet. In spite of that, he became greatly discouraged, and, resolved to give up the charge, he was on his way to carry out his purpose. In the church he overheard the sexton praying earnestly for him. As he told us of this in chapel, he said, "I cried within myself, 'O my God, shall I retreat with Thy servant thus praying for me?' " He did not retire.

When he was dead, Professor Harris



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declared, "We ne'er shall see his like again." William Morley Punshon, the peerless orator of Wesleyan Methodism in his day, was in this country at the time of Thomson's death and pronounced him "the Chrysostom of the American pulpit."

How can I better illustrate his past, present, and future than by using his own language; "Religion leads beyond Philosophy. The Christian rises side by side with the philosopher into the starry heavens. They tread foot to foot the Zodiac round. Together their souls expand, and, burn, and wonder, and adore. And here the Christian bows to his learned companion, and leaves him in the Milky Way, and on his wings of faith ascends the upper skies, enters the paradise of God, soars through fields of life, and surveys the mansions of the blessed. He wears the crown of life, and waves the palm of immortality. He mingles with the blood-washed throng, and repeats their halleluiahs."

### III.

I am aware that my picture, both composite and personal, is meager. Some of you knew these men well, and could furnish many a characteristic fact which I have not presented. What fine wives and children and families they had! May their kind multiply! Thank God, they do.

A college generation ordinarily lasts but four years and is gone. "Dear Old '59" is thinning out; not half of us left. The great Alumni army is falling out on the front line. The second Faculty is following the first very close into the shadows. The third can not tarry long.

Where is that great cluster of Five to-day? Are they still living? Surely they are. They survive in these grounds and monumental buildings. They live in this large and able Faculty, to which have come:

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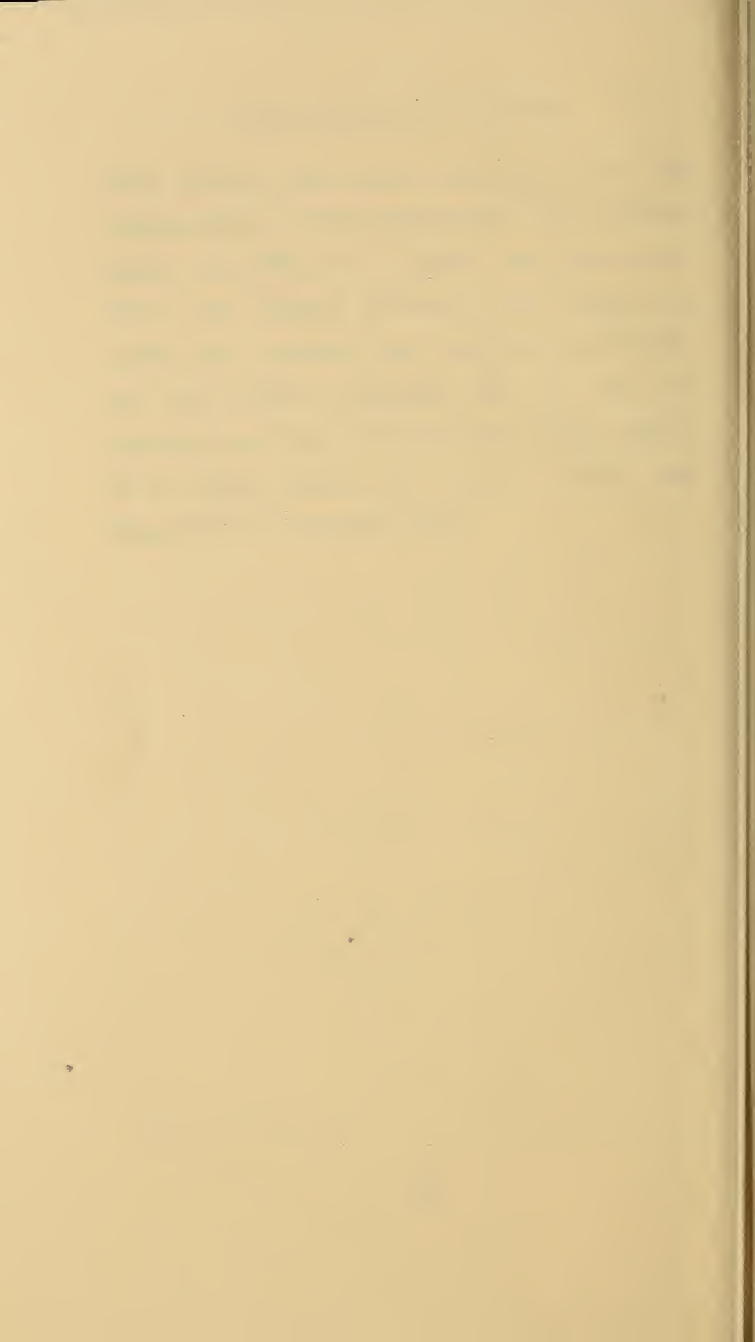
opportunities such as they never had. They live in the men and women graduates that are making this world better in every country under the sun.

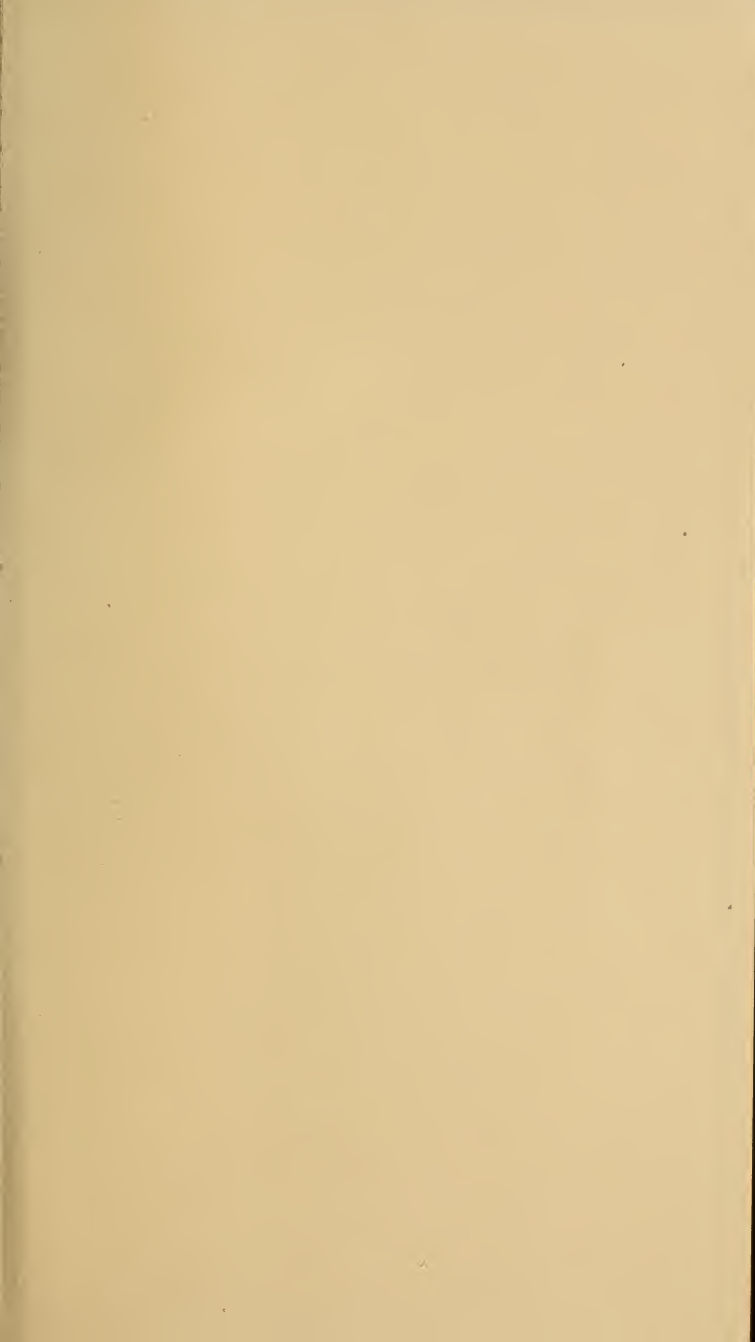
But is immortality only a matter of personal influence transmitted? Is it not rather personal, individual immortality? Surely Thomson, thou didst describe in advance thine own ascension to the upper skies. Harris, thou hast surely found the "Great Hereafter." Merrick, thou didst anticipate so often "the solemn grandeur of a never-ending eternity." McCabe, thou hast doubtless joined Jonathan Edwards; though so opposed in this life, kindred souls in that. Williams, last but not least among the immortals, thou hast realized thy comment on Romans, declaring "the grandeur of the apostle's theme, and the grandeur of the apostle's thoughts, and the grandeur of the apostle's style, can not be surpassed, if they can be equaled, in all the world's literature." This was a pre-

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view which thou hast realized as to the declaration, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, no depth, nor any other creature, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Hail and farewell, and forever hail!

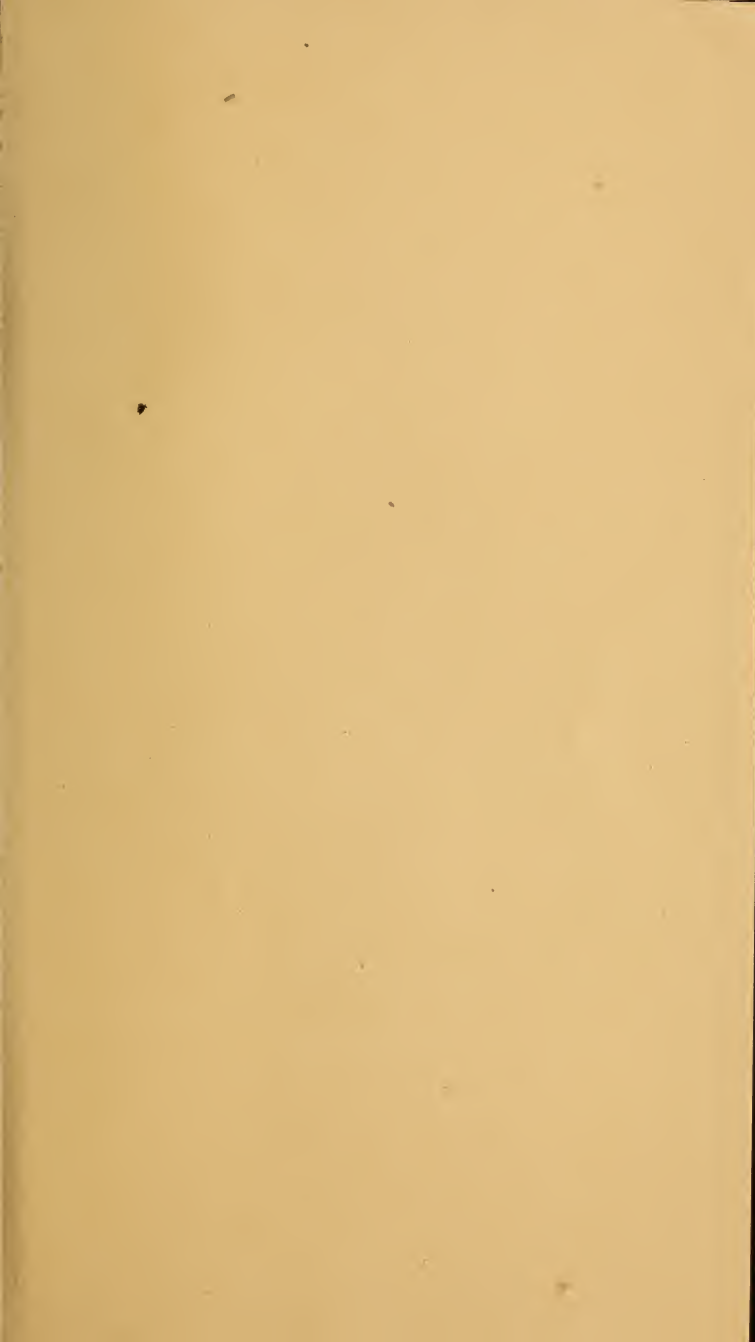








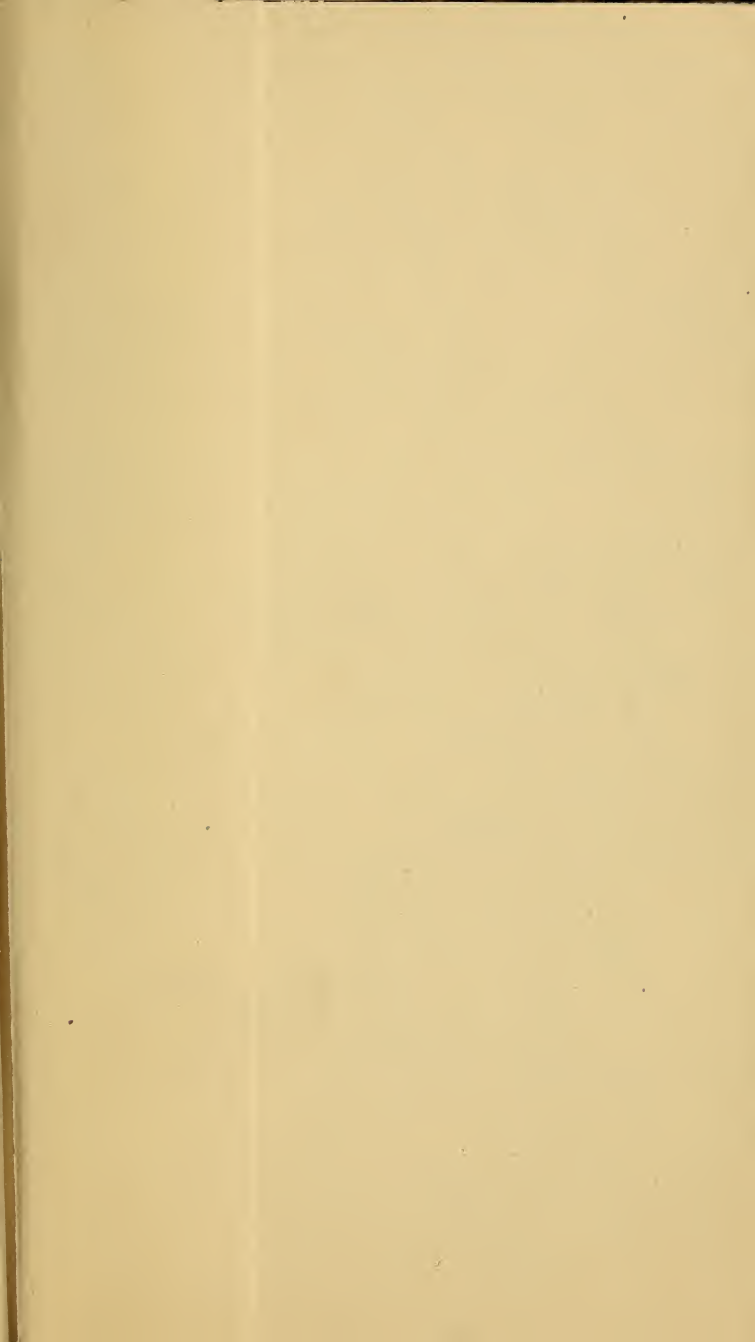




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